

LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **July 13, 2004, Work Session**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 4

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

ACTION: **X**

INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: **Proposed Conversion to Two-way Traffic Downtown**

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the hiring of a traffic consultant to study the possible conversion of Main Street and Church Street to two-way traffic.

SUMMARY:

Downtown merchants are interested in converting Main Street and Church Street to two-way traffic. They believe that this conversion will maximize their exposure to motorists, slow down traffic, reduce confusion and travel distance, and improve access. The City and Lynch's Landing began researching the issue and found several other cities that converted their downtown streets to two-way. Gerry Harter, City Traffic Engineer, made a presentation at a Lynch's Landing Quarterly Forum on 12/02/03 to explain the process of a conversion. In addition, Mayor Carl Hutcherson and Rachel Flynn contacted the former Mayor of Albuquerque, Jim Baca. He was instrumental in successfully converting certain streets in their downtown to two-way traffic. Mayor Baca credited their success to their traffic consultant, Walter Kulash, with Glatting Jackson Engineers in Orlando, Florida.

The City contacted Mr. Kulash and invited him to meet with City staff/Lynch's Landing and assess downtown Lynchburg's situation. Mr. Kulash concluded that our downtown would be a good candidate for a two-way conversion given our traffic volumes and street widths. In addition to City staff and the Lynch's Landing Director, he also met with the public at a Quarterly Forum to discuss his experiences with two-way conversion in several other downtowns. Lynch's Landing also formed a Citizen's Steering Committee that will focus on the matter and advise accordingly. The committee includes representatives from Genworth, Main Street Eatery, Bowen Jewelry, the YMCA, Opplerman's, and the Allied Arts Building.

Support for the conversion is mixed, with some strongly supportive and others raising concerns. All agree that further information is needed before an informed decision can be made. Given that, City staff, Lynch's Landing, and the Citizen's Steering Committee recommend proceeding to the next step. This involves a traffic study prior to any physical changes. Mr. Kulash's cost estimates range from \$15,000 to \$40,000 depending on the level of analysis required. It is anticipated that the scope of work would include turning movement analysis the development of a traffic movement simulation, an analysis of parking impacts and opportunities, and an estimate of the cost to make the necessary physical changes to accommodate two-way traffic.

PRIOR ACTIONS:

c. 1955: Main Street and Church Street are converted to one-way traffic.

November 2003: Downtown merchants submit petition to the City requesting conversion of Main Street and Church Street back to two-way traffic.

December 2, 2003: Lynch's Landing Quarterly Forum and discussion with Gerry Harter.

December 19, 2003: Mayor Hutcherson and Rachel Flynn discuss two-way conversion of Albuquerque's downtown streets with the former Mayor, Jim Baca. He recommends traffic consultant, Walter Kulash, with Glatting Jackson.

June 14, 2004: Walter Kulash meets with City staff/Lynch's Landing, and makes presentation at Quarterly Forum.

June 15, 2004: Mr. Kulash meets with Citizen's Steering Committee.

July 1, 2004: Lynch's Landing Board votes to endorse the next steps for further study of the two-way conversion.

FISCAL IMPACT: It is anticipated that the cost of the study would be approximately \$40,000. Funds for the study would come from the capital appropriation for downtown improvements.

CONTACTS: Rachel Flynn – 455-3902 Terri Proffitt – 528-3950, Gerry Harter – 455-3935

ATTACHMENTS: None

REVIEWED BY: lkp